

Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
Water Resources Division  
Water Rights Bureau

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**  
**For Routine Actions with Limited Environmental Impact**

**Part I. Proposed Action Description**

1. Applicant/Contact name and address:

Harding Family Properties LLC  
2406 River Rd.  
Missoula, MT 59804

Joel Wright  
c/o Granite Creek Engineering  
PO Box 268  
Florence, MT 59833-0268

2. Type of action: Application for Beneficial Water Use Permit No. 76M-30111362
3. Water source name: Groundwater – Missoula Aquifer
4. Location affected by project: NWNWNW of Section 20, T13N, R19W, Missoula County
5. Narrative summary of the proposed project, purpose, action to be taken, and benefits:  
Applicant proposes to divert water at a maximum of 60 gallons per minute (GPM) up to a diverted volume of 9.54 acre-feet (AF) from January 1 to December 31 for the purpose of multiple domestic. The proposed diversions are 68-foot-deep groundwater wells fitted with submersible pumps, located in the NWNWNW of Section 20, T13N, R19W, Missoula County. The point of diversion and place of use are located in the Middle Clark Fork River Basin (76M) which is an area that is not subject to any water right basin closures or controlled groundwater restrictions. The two wells will be manifold together but will not be used in conjunction; the wells will alternate operation every 24 hours. Each well will have a 5 horsepower (HP) submersible pump capable of diverting a maximum of 60 GPM. The wells are sourced from the same water-bearing zone and are manifold in the same source of supply piping. The pumps will extract water from the Missoula Groundwater Aquifer and wastewater will be processed at the Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant. The DNRC shall issue a water use permit if an applicant proves the criteria in 85-2-311 MCA are met.
6. Agencies consulted during preparation of the Environmental Assessment:

Montana Natural Heritage Program  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Species of Concern  
2005 Dewatered Stream List  
303(d) list of impaired streams

## **Part II. Environmental Review**

### **1. Environmental Impact Checklist:**

<b>PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT</b>
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#### **WATER QUANTITY, QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION**

**Water quantity** - *Assess whether the source of supply is identified as a chronically or periodically dewatered stream by DFWP. Assess whether the proposed use will worsen the already dewatered condition.*

The 2005 Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks Dewatering Concern Areas list does not identify Lower Clark Fork River as chronically or periodically dewatered. The proposed appropriation will result in 1.28 AF of total depletions to the Clark Fork River. The maximum rate of depletion occurs during the months of May through September with a depletion rate of 1.5 GPM and a depletion volume of 0.20 AF.

*Determination:* No significant impact.

**Water quality** - *Assess whether the stream is listed as water quality impaired or threatened by DEQ, and whether the proposed project will affect water quality.*

The proposed appropriation is for groundwater. Water diverted from the two extraction wells will supply five homes in a long-term care facility and wastewater will be treated at the Missoula Wastewater Treatment Plant before being discharged back into the Clark Fork River. DEQ's 2016 303(d) list does not include Lower Clark Fork River above its confluence with Flathead River; however, the 2016 Impaired Waters list does indicate that the Clark Fork River, from Rattlesnake Creek to Fish Creek, does not fully support aquatic life or primary contact recreation due to mine tailings, mill tailings, and municipal point source discharge.

*Determination:* No significant impact.

**Groundwater** - *Assess if the proposed project impacts ground water quality or supply. If this is a groundwater appropriation, assess if it could impact adjacent surface water flows.*

The proposed appropriation is for multiple domestic. Water diverted from the aquifer will be used for the identified beneficial use of multiple domestic, after which, wastewater will be returned to the river via the local water treatment plant. The maximum effect on surface water flows is 1.5 GPM which will occur May through September, annually.

*Determination:* No significant impact.

**DIVERSION WORKS** - *Assess whether the means of diversion, construction and operation of the appropriation works of the proposed project will impact any of the following: channel impacts, flow modifications, barriers, riparian areas, dams, well construction.*

The applicant proposes to install two extraction wells, each equipped with a 5 HP submersible pump that will pull 60 GPM up to a total of 9.54 AF, annually. The proposed use of groundwater will not impact any channels, cause adverse effect due to flow modifications, create any barriers or impact riparian areas, dams, or other existing or future wells.

*Determination:* No impact.

**UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

**Endangered and threatened species** - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any “species of special concern,” or create a barrier to the migration or movement of fish or wildlife. For groundwater, assess whether the proposed project, including impacts on adjacent surface flows, would impact any threatened or endangered species or “species of special concern.”*

The Montana Natural Heritage Program (MNHP) was utilized to determine if there are any threatened or endangered fish, wildlife, plants or aquatic species or any “species of special concern”, that could be impacted by the proposed project. The MNHP identified the following species of concern: Bull Trout, Westslope Cutthroat Trout, Fringed Myotis, Western Skink, Bobolink, Hoary Bat, Evening Grosbeak, Pileated Woodpecker, Flammulated Owl, Varied Thrush, Cassin’s Finch, Great Blue Heron, *Stygobromus tritus*, and has identified the area as a bat roost for non-cave dwelling bats. In addition, the following plant species of concern have been identified: *Collomia debilis* var. *camporum* (Alpine *Collomia*) and *Mimulus ampliatus* (Stalk-leaved Monkeyflower).

The location of the proposed groundwater wells is in an area that supports commercial and residential development. Any impacts to the above-listed species have likely already occurred as a result of prior land conversions. It is unlikely that any additional impacts will occur as a result of the proposed system.

*Determination:* No significant impact.

**Wetlands** - *Consult and assess whether the apparent wetland is a functional wetland (according to COE definitions), and whether the wetland resource would be impacted.*

The proposed project does not create or impact any wetlands.

*Determination:* No impact.

**Ponds** - *For ponds, consult and assess whether existing wildlife, waterfowl, or fisheries resources would be impacted.*

The proposed multiple domestic water supply system will not create nor eliminate any ponds.

*Determination: No impact.*

**GEOLOGY/SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE** - *Assess whether there will be degradation of soil quality, alteration of soil stability, or moisture content. Assess whether the soils are heavy in salts that could cause saline seep.*

Construction of the proposed extraction wells will cause short-term soil disturbance. Construction at the area of the proposed water use has been completed and no additional degradation of soil quality, soil stability, or moisture content is expected. Soils at the place of use are non-saline to very slightly saline and thus, unlikely to be susceptible to saline seep.

*Determination: No impact.*

**VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY/NOXIOUS WEEDS** - *Assess impacts to existing vegetative cover. Assess whether the proposed project would result in the establishment or spread of noxious weeds.*

The site where the proposed wells are located is within a mixed commercial and residential area. The parcel includes a parking area, living facilities, and landscaping. It is the responsibility of the landowner to maintain weed control at the place of use for this water right.

*Determination: No impact*

**AIR QUALITY** - *Assess whether there will be a deterioration of air quality or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants.*

Deterioration of air quality and/or adverse effects on vegetation due to increased air pollutants is not expected. Pumps used to extract water from the groundwater aquifer will create a minimal impact to air quality standards in the Missoula Valley.

*Determination: No significant impact.*

**HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES** - *Assess whether there will be degradation of unique archeological or historical sites in the vicinity of the proposed project if it is on State or Federal Lands. If it is not on State or Federal Lands simply state NA-project not located on State or Federal Lands.*

N/A – project not located on State or Federal Lands.

*Determination: No impact.*

**DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AND ENERGY** - *Assess any other impacts on environmental resources of land, water and energy not already addressed.*

All impacts to land, water, and energy have been identified and no additional impacts are anticipated.

*Determination: No impact.*

## HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

**LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS** - *Assess whether the proposed project is inconsistent with any locally adopted environmental plans and goals.*

The Department finds no locally adopted environmental plans or goals relevant to the requested water use proposal for multiple domestic.

*Determination:* No impact.

**ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES** - *Assess whether the proposed project will impact access to or the quality of recreational and wilderness activities.*

The proposed project will not inhibit, alter or impair access to the present recreational opportunities in the area. The project is not expected to create any significant pollution, noise, or traffic congestion in the area that may alter the quality of recreational opportunities.

*Determination:* No impact.

**HUMAN HEALTH** - *Assess whether the proposed project impacts on human health.*

No impacts to human health were identified.

*Determination:* No impact

**PRIVATE PROPERTY** - *Assess whether there are any government regulatory impacts on private property rights.*

Yes\_\_\_ No X *If yes, analyze any alternatives considered that could reduce, minimize, or eliminate the regulation of private property rights.*

*Determination:* No impact.

**OTHER HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES** - For routine actions of limited environmental impact, the following may be addressed in a checklist fashion.

*Impacts on:*

- (a) Cultural uniqueness and diversity? None identified
- (b) Local and state tax base and tax revenues? Harding Family Properties, LLC is a long-term care facility (Bee Hive Homes) providing employment and contributing to local and state tax base and tax revenues
- (c) Existing land uses? None identified
- (d) Quantity and distribution of employment? There are up to 40 employees servicing this long-term care facility
- (e) Distribution and density of population and housing? There are five existing homes providing living space for up to 66 residents
- (f) Demands for government services? None identified
- (g) Industrial and commercial activity? None identified
- (h) Utilities? None identified
- (i) Transportation? None identified
- (j) Safety? None identified
- (k) Other appropriate social and economic circumstances? None identified

**2. *Secondary and cumulative impacts on the physical environment and human population:***

Secondary Impacts: None identified

Cumulative Impacts: None identified

**3. *Describe any mitigation/stipulation measures:***

No reasonable alternatives were identified in the EA.

**4. *Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, if an alternative is reasonably available and prudent to consider:***

No alternative identified.

*PART III. Conclusion*

**1. Preferred Alternative:** N/A

**2 Comments and Responses:** N/A

**3. Finding:**

Yes\_\_\_ No **X** Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required?

*If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.*

An EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action because no significant impacts have been identified as a result of the proposed action.

*Name of person(s) responsible for preparation of EA:*

*Name:* Amy Groen

*Title:* Hydrologist/Specialist

*Date:* May 31, 2018